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RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO PRIORITY 0174
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE PRIORITY 3459
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SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL NATO PGOV MOPS MARR KV YI
SUBJECT: ITALY PLANS COORDINATED REDUCTION IN KFOR
CONTINGENT

Classified By: Ambassador Ivo Daalder. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In a letter addressed to new NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Italian PermRep Stefanini on August 4 said that Rome intends to decrease its participation in KFOR in line with KFOR's overall scale of reductions as it moves through the first gate on the path to a deterrent presence. At the same time, Stefanini laid down a marker that Italy expects the KFOR move to deterrent presence to be coordinated, orderly, and conditions-based. Stefanini privately told the Ambassador that although he had been instructed to deliver the letter, he had worked to make sure that it was clear that Italy continued to believe that Allied reductions needed to be coordinated. The Italians have in the past expressed concern privately about whether the French will coordinate reductions in their KFOR contribution, despite French guarantees that they will do so.

¶2. (SBU) The text of the letter follows:

Brussels, 4 August 2009

Dear Secretary General,

Further to our brief discussion at the Council today concerning the situation in Kosovo, I would like to hereby inform you that Italy wishes to endorse the assessment contained in the KFOR Trip Report issued by Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Admiral James G. Stavridis (doc. SG(2009)0674).

All political and military indications concur on the steady progress being made towards reaching the conditions required for KFOR passage to the so-called "gate one." Therefore, barring any significant changes in the political and security situation, we support a timely implementation of the decision taken by NATO Defence Ministers on June 13th regarding transition to a deterrent presence posture in Kosovo.

We expect this transition to become effective as of January 2010; consequently, Italy will decrease its participation in KFOR in line with the overall scale of reductions, to be advised by SACEUR and agreed upon by the Council.

In this context, allow me to underscore two key points. Firstly, we trust that all national cutbacks will be discussed, decided jointly and fully consistent with the

across-the-board reductions. Secondly, as I mentioned during today's Council, Kosovo and the Western Balkans remain a high priority for the Alliance. Specifically, NATO's presence in Kosovo following the transition to a deterrent posture - in itself reversible depending on the circumstances - will remain strictly conditions-based.

I copy this letter to all Permanent Representatives.

Yours Sincerely,

Stefano Stefanini

END TEXT
DAALDER